

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, CG, KS

SUBJECT: ENGULU VISIT TO SEOUL

REF: SEOUL 1318

- SEOUL 1318

EMBASSY SHOULD RESPOND TO ROK'S REQUEST FOR ADVICE ON
EMBASSY SHOULD RESPOND TO ROK'S REQUEST FOR ADVICE ON
HANDLING OF ENGULU APPROACH BY MAKING GENERAL POINT
THAT WHATEVER RESPONSE ROK MAKES IT MUST BE ITS OWN
DECISION TAKEN IN LIGHT OF ITS OWN INTEREST.

WITH RESPECT TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RAISED BY LHO, EMBASSY
SHOULD ANSWER QUESTIONS POSED IN PARA 3 OF REFTTEL BY
DRAWING ON THE FOLLOWING AS APPROPRIATE:

A. A PROTRACTED FOREIGN EXCHANGE SHORTFALL HAS STARVED
ZAIRE OF ESSENTIAL IMPORTS, HAS ADDED TO CONSUMER INFLA-

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TION (40 IN 1974) AND HAS BROUGHT ABOUT A MAJOR SLOWDOWN

IN INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION. ZAIRE'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE DUE TO A 47 DECREASE IN GOZ HARD CURRENCY REVENUES FROM 1974 TO 1975 AS COPPER PRICES FELL. ZAIRE'S MILITARY PROBLEMS ARISE OUT OF THE ANGOLAN WAR, THE INCREASES IN SOPHISTICATED SOVIET WEAPONRY IN CENTRAL AFRICA, AND THE PRESENCE OF 12,000 CUBAN TROOPS SO CLOSE TO ITS FRONTIER.

ZAIRE-NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS ARE IN A STATE OF FLUX AS A RESULT OF MOBUTU'S UNHAPPINESS OVER THE FAILURE OF THE NORTH KOREAN MILITARY TRAINING MISSION. OVER 100 NORTH KOREAN ADVISORS LEFT ZAIRE IN DECEMBER LEAVING BEHIND A ZAIRIAN ARMY DIVISION THAT WAS ONLY ONE-HALF TRAINED. ABOUT 20 NORTH KOREAN ADVISORS REMAIN AT THE KITONA BASIC TRAINING CENTER. THEY ARE ENGAGED IN PLATOON COMMANDER AND ARTILLERY TRAINING. MOBUTU PERCEIVES THE CONTINUED SOVIET/CUBAN PRESENCE IN ANGOLA AS A SERIOUS THREAT TO HIS REGIME AND IS LOOKING TO OTHER NATIONS FOR MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

B. DESPITE MOBUTU'S EFFORTS OVER THE PAST YEARS TO CULTIVATE A THIRD WORLD IMAGE AND THE NORTH KOREAN PRESENCE TO INFLUENCE HIM TO THE CONTRARY, IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT THAT THE GOZ WOULD CHANGE ITS VOTING PATTERN OF ABSENCES ON THE KOREAN QUESTION IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS BECAUSE OF SOUTH KOREAN ECONOMIC OR MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

C. FOR FY 76 THE ADMINISTRATION HAS REQUESTED FROM CONGRESS FOR ZAIRE A TOTAL OF DOLS 31 MILLION IN VARIOUS FORMS OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND DOLS 19 MILLION IN FMS CREDITS; AN ADDITIONAL DOLS 35 MILLION IN CCC AND EXIM CREDITS ARE ALSO BEING IMPLEMENTED. THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE OVER FY75 AND IS IN DIRECT RESPONSE TO ZAIRE'S ECONOMIC AND INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEMS. IT IS PROBABLE THAT FY77 PROGRAM REQUESTS WILL BE AT LEAST AS LARGE AS FY76.

D. THE GOZ ACCEPTANCE OF THE IMF STABILIZATION PROGRAM (EXPECTED IN A FEW WEEKS) WILL RESULT IN SOME
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OF THE MOST DIFFICULT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DECISIONS THAT MOBUTU HAS YET FACED IN HIS TEN YEAR REGIME. WHILE HIS REGIME MAY UNDERGO FURTHER STRAIN, WE DOUBT IF ANY POLITICAL DISSIDENTS CAN MUSTER ENOUGH STRENGTH TO REMOVE HIM FROM POWER. WE CURRENTLY ESTIMATE THAT IT WILL TAKE SIX MONTHS TO ONE YEAR BEFORE THE EFFECTS OF THE IMF PROGRAM BEGIN TO TURN THE ZAIRE ECONOMY AROUND.

E. WE ARE PRESENTLY PROVIDING DIRECT MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE AND IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE OR DESIRABLE TO USE A THIRD COUNTRY INTERMEDIARY. AS ROKG AWARE, IT IS PROHIBITED FROM TRANSFERRING MILITARY EQUIPMENT IT RECEIVED UNDER US MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO ANY THIRD PARTY WITHOUT PRIOR US APPROVAL. WE WOULD SEE SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN AGREEING TO ANY SUCH TRANSFER. INGERSOLL

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